United Nations S/PV.8049

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8049th meeting

Thursday, 14 September 2017, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Michon
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2017/745)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2017/745)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/776, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by all the members of the Security Council. I would like to thank them for co-sponsoring the draft resolution.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/745, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2377 (2017).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2377 (2017). In finalizing the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, we have taken an important step in supporting the parties to consolidate the gains achieved over the past year as they implement the next phase of the peace process.

It seems that each time that we meet in the Chamber on Colombia, there is another historical milestone to welcome. In July (see S/PV.7997), we welcomed the laying down of arms by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), and earlier this month (see S/PV.8041), we saw the FARC transform into a political party — the new Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común — at its inaugural Congress in Bogotá. As President Santos Calderón told us when we visited in May, the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement is irreversible.

But irreversible and sustainable are not exactly the same. We have officially reached the hard bit now. While a laydown of arms more than half a century in the making is without question history, it happens in a moment. The reincorporation of the FARC into society will not happen instantly. It will be a process. It will require commitment. It will require sacrifice. It will mean putting aside differences that were born long before most Colombians.

Sustainable peace will depend on the FARC's successful reincorporation into civilian life, so I am pleased that the United Nations will continue to be able to play a supportive role in accompanying the parties in the next crucial phase of implementation. I want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnault, and his team for their dedication and hard work over the past few weeks to put in place in all necessary preparations to enable the Verification Mission to start work on 26 September — the day after the first Mission finishes its mandate. I want to reiterate our thanks to Jean Arnault and the first United Nations Mission for a truly excellent job in supporting the FARC's laydown of arms.

The Pope's visit to Colombia last week further reinforced Colombia's remarkable achievements over the past 18 months, and we welcome the most recent positive development, on 4 September, when the Government and the National Liberation Army signed a bilateral ceasefire. It is also very encouraging that the parties have indicated that they would like the United

Nations to play a role in verifying that ceasefire. It is a resounding endorsement of the United Nations work with the FARC peace process over the past year. We stand ready to support it in whatever way we can and look forward to further advice from the Secretary-General in due course.

With our action today, we have shown that the Council remains fully committed to assisting Colombia on its journey towards peace. We have put a verification team in place, based on the Secretary-General's recommendations following close consultations with the parties. It is now up to Colombia — both its Government and its people — to show that all of the history that has been made up to this point will mean a lasting peace for generations to come.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): The United States, too, warmly welcomes the continued support of the Security Council to Colombia. The Government of Colombia has made critical progress in implementing the Final Peace Agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). As a result of the parties' commitment and the support of the United Nations, the FARC has peacefully laid down its arms. The last containers with all of those weapons are now in the hands of the United Nations, and the Government has already begun the process of reintegrating the former combatants into society.

Colombia has shown the world that commitment to a political process and a shared future, along with strong, unified support from the Council and the international community, can bring success in peacebuilding. Colombia is an example for the region and for the world. But now Colombia faces the challenge of consolidating that peace. The threat to that peace is serious, and it comes in the form of a lack of infrastructure, basic services and the rule of law in conflict-affected areas formerly occupied by the FARC, creating a haven for criminal activities, drugs and violence. Yet we remain focused on building on the gains made and creating the conditions for peace to prosper. In particular, resolution 2377 (2017), adopted today, advances the readiness of the second political mission in helping to address these challenges. We stand ready to partner with Colombia and support the Security Council in the hard work ahead.

Additionally, we welcome the announcement by the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army of a temporary bilateral ceasefire. The United States joins other members of the Council in expressing our interest in considering how the temporary bilateral ceasefire could be supported by the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's recommendations on the way forward in the coming days.

With our vote today, the United States underscores that we stand with Colombia as a steadfast partner and as a friend. The United States has stood with Colombia through times of great challenge, and we continue to stand with it in this moment of hope and opportunity.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The adoption of a resolution by the Security Council is in no way extraordinary. What is extraordinary today is the peace process that the Colombian people are pursuing. This is a real example to the world of commitment to peace undertaken by leaders who once were in conflict with one another, and which has culminated in the full integration into the political system of Colombia of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. That is an absolutely extraordinary development in the history of peacemaking.

My colleagues have also just underscored the fact that the most difficult stages lie ahead. What is equally extraordinary is the support that the Security Council is providing to the Colombian people. The United Nations is committed to and standing shoulder to shoulder with Colombia in this peacemaking process. We are full of hope following the recent announcement of the ceasefire recently signed by the Government of Colombia with the National Liberation Army, which suggests that we will soon be seeing the extinction of the few flames that continue to smolder.

We extend our congratulations to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the entire United Nations team in Colombia for the admirable work they are undertaking. Of course, we warmly congratulate the dear people of Colombia.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation supported the adoption of resolution 2377 (2017), endorsing the size and mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, which will begin its work on 26 September. We consider it important that the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia was elaborated in close consultation with the Colombian parties.

The successful course of the peace process in Colombia allows us to draw two lessons, the first of which is the importance of the principle of national ownership. It is only as a result of the will of the Colombian sides that the peace agreements were able to be reached and implemented. Secondly, the example of Colombia proves that primarily political solutions are the only guarantee for an effective and lasting settlement. The role of the United Nations and the Verification Mission is to help the parties in preserve the peace process and moving it forward, which has already enabled us to take to the first steps on the path towards the socioeconomic and political reintegration of former combatants, including the formation of a political party. We hope that the parties will continue to address outstanding issues in good faith and that the Verification Mission will provide the requisite support.

It is important not to weaken the close attention we have paid to the security situation to ensure that no vacuums emerge. We therefore deem important the progress in the peace process achieved between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army on a temporary ceasefire. This became possible in part through the help of guarantor States: Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Norway, Chile and Ecuador. We hope that it will bring about a lasting settlement of the long-standing internal conflict and contribute to the establishment of peace.

We await the Secretariat's imminent recommendations on how the Verification Mission should respond to the request by the Government and the National Liberation Army's for assistance in monitoring the implementation of their agreement. We again reaffirm our readiness to continue to assist the people and Government of Colombia in their endeavour to forge robust peace and post-conflict development.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2377 (2017). Japan is pleased to have co-sponsored it.

The first United Nations Mission in Colombia has been a model of success. We commend the Mission for its efficient responsible work, including in the process of the laying down of arms. This success was built on the strong commitment to the Peace Agreement by both the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia.

The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia will also rely on the continued commitment and determination of all parties, including on economic and social integration, security guarantees and the full observance of the peace agreement. The whole-of-United Nations approach will remain critical.

Japan reiterates its support for the parties to implement the peace agreement and will closely follow the work of the second Mission.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia commends the unanimous adoption of resolution 2376 (2017), endorsing the recommendations of the Secretary-General for the establishment of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The fact that it has been not only unanimously adopted, but also sponsored by all 15 members of the Council is an indication of how much we support this process.

We have seen extraordinary progress in the peace process in Colombia. The consolidation of the ceasefire, the laying down of arms by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the establishment of a new party and the incorporation of the FARC into the political life in Colombia are key indications that progress is being made.

Bolivia wishes to thank and pay tribute to the United Nations Mission in Colombia, both to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his entire team, who in this short period of time, has efficiently supported, through the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, all the progress made in the peace process. We particularly commend the men and women who have acted as observers as part of the Mechanism, which was deployed last year. They have done an impeccable job.

We cannot forget that the real protagonists of this process are the leadership of the Government — President Santos — and the leadership of the FARC in their commitment to the victims of decades of war and clashes and, in essence, to the Colombian people. We also cannot forget that there is still a great deal of work to be done. We must focus on the main areas of the peace agreement, in particular those that refer to transforming the living conditions of the most vulnerable members of society and closing the gaps between urban and rural areas. We hail the progress made in the area of the granting of land deeds.

As we know, the United Nations Verfication Mission in Colombia, the second Mission in the country,

will be responsible for verifying the political, economic and social reincorporation of more than 10,000 former FARC combatants and implementing protection and security measures to protect them, pursuant to the points already indicated in the previous meeting on the final agreement. This is perhaps one of the most complex parts of this process. Bolivia believes that achieving lasting and sustainable peace in Colombia will depend on the successful reintegration of former FARC combatants into civilian life. It is highly likely that in this phase of the peace process the relevant bodies will turn away from the peace process and the progress being made will not be made a priority by the relevant organs. That is why, in these circumstances, the Security Council in particular and the international community in general must lend more decisive support to Colombian progress.

Bolivia also wishes to commend the agreement reached between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army to implement a bilateral and temporary ceasefire, which was recently announced by a round of talks held in Quito. We are ready to support this process in the way that we are requested to do so.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal commends the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2377 (2017), approving the Secretary-General's recommendations with regard to the size, operational modalities and the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The new Mission, created pursuant to resolution 2366 (2017), testifies to the considerable progress achieved by the Colombian Government and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común as part of the process of laying down arms. This new promising phase will enable the parties to take the necessary steps for a political, economic and social resolution of the crisis.

Senegal welcomes the political will demonstrated, which has allowed all these results to be realized and encourages the parties to continue along this promising path. The announcement of the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army is something which is part and parcel of this movement. Colombia can count on Senegal's support for achieving a lasting and sustainable peace. The Colombian experience is an excellent source of inspiration for the whole world and for Africa in particular. Seen from Africa, what is happening in Colombia follows saying I heard on Colombian television: a people who does not know their history is condemned to see it repeated. Colombia knows its history.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council for convening this meeting.

The Council's unanimous co-sponsorhip and adoption of resolution 2377 (2017), containing the Secretary-General's recommendations, is a new demonstration of support to Colombia and will be important in achieving peace in our country. We would also like to thank the United Kingdom, the penholder of the resolution, for its continued support, and, of course, the Secretary-General and the team of Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their support and unswerving commitment to peace and reconciliation in Colombia.

We realize that the challenge is enormous, but in the past months the Council has witnessed the actions that have been taken, step by step, despite the obstacles and difficulties, by the parties to accomplish the ceasefire, the demobilization of the combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia and their definitive laying down of arms and, currently, the neutralization of weapons, a vital process that reaffirms their political will. As Council members are aware, this is a crucial though very difficult time, which demands all of our political will and the Council's support. We have been greatly helped by the participation of the international community and the observers from the countries of the region and elsewhere. We can all agree that their support has been effective.

I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks for the demonstration of support we have seen to the bilateral and temporary ceasefire recently announced between the Government and the National Liberation Army, which will come into force on 1 October for an initial period of 102 days. The people of Colombia firmly believe that these new developments will open up infinite possibilities for a nation where reconciliation and the rebuilding of a collective peace will eventually strengthen our democracy that will help the entire region and, needless to say, improve the living conditions not just of Colombians in urban centres but also of those in rural areas. I thank the Council once again.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.